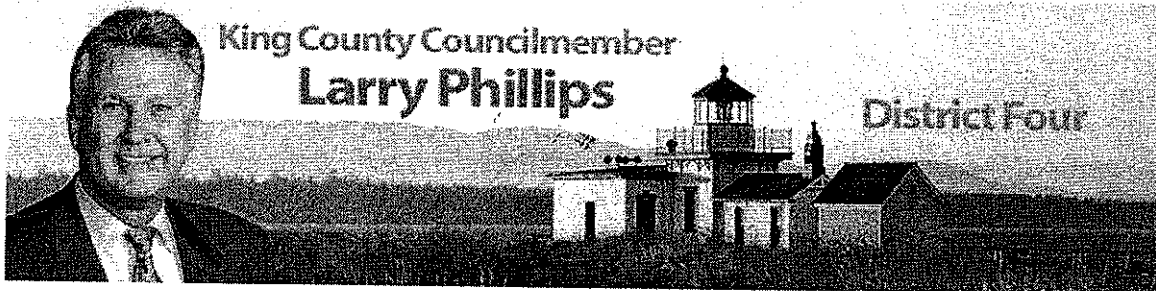


**Lisa Clausen**

---

**From:** Phillips, Larry [Larry.Phillips@kingcounty.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 28, 2011 9:33 AM  
**To:** Public Council Inbox; Mike Martin  
**Cc:** Moore, Kendall; Carlson, Paul; Zoppi, Leah; Mansfield, Janice; Resha, John  
**Subject:** July 21st King County Council TrEE Committee meeting



Dear Councilmembers & Mr. Martin,

Thank you for hosting a special evening meeting of the King County Council's Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee, which I chair, in the Burien City Council Chambers on **July 21<sup>st</sup> at 6 pm.**

This meeting will provide an opportunity for public comment on the King County Executive's proposed 100,000-hour transit service reduction for February 2012 and the Metro Transit budget crisis. I hope you will consider attending, and also help spread the word to members of your community.

Below is some further information about the issue:

**What problem are we trying to solve?**

The recession-driven decline in the sales-tax revenues that support public transit has left King County with two choices: pass interim funding for Metro Transit to continue service at current levels, or 17% of Metro transit service—600,000 annual service hours—to balance the budget against this shortfall. Cuts of this magnitude are the rough equivalent of eliminating all rush hour bus service for commuters, or all weekend service in King County, and would take our transit system back to the size it was in 1996.

**What has King County done to address this challenge so far?**

In the past two years, Metro Transit has transformed its operations to hold off these cuts and wrench every available dollar out of the agency for service, including: achieving new scheduling efficiencies; eliminating more than 100 staff positions; deferring planned service expansion; reducing operating reserves; and reducing its capital program. In addition, riders are sharing the pain: since 2007, Metro has raised fares four times, an increase of 80 percent. Metro's employees were also part of the solution: salary and wage freezes, coupled with cost-of-living raise givebacks and other concessions, will reduce Metro's labor costs by up to \$17 million per year.

Despite these fare increases, budget reductions, and operational efficiencies, it is not enough to cover the anticipated shortfall and we are now nearly out of tools to save our system. The savings and efficiencies created by Metro over the past few years save approximately \$143 million per year, but the drop in sales tax revenues means Metro still faces an operating shortfall of \$60 million a year each year from 2012 through 2015.

CFTR: 07/11/11

### **What is the Congestion Reduction Charge?**

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, the King County Executive proposed legislation that would enact the one tool recently authorized by the State Legislature for King County: a temporary \$20 Congestion Reduction Charge on vehicle licenses for each of the next two years. He also proposed companion legislation that would adopt a plan for spending revenue raised through the charge. The two-year charge would generate about \$25 million per year. The combination of the congestion charge and the use of one-time reserves would enable Metro to avoid large service reductions for the two year period in 2012-2013.

As you may know, due to a clause in the authorizing state legislation, a super-majority of the King County Council (6 of the 9 councilmembers) will need to vote "yes" in order to enact the charge. Alternatively, the council can put the question before voters by a simple majority vote of the council. However, putting a temporary funding measure before voters is expensive and distracting from the larger conversation about a permanent stable funding source for Metro. I will keep you updated on this issue, including opportunities for public comment.

### **What if the Congestion Reduction Charge is not enacted?**

Should the charge not be enacted, the Executive also transmitted legislation for the Council to begin shrinking Metro service by 600,000 hours of annual bus service over the next two years. The proposed ordinance, which is one of the subjects of the hearing, covers just the first round of service cuts – a 100,000-hour reduction to begin in February 2012.

### **My position**

I support this emergency, stopgap funding measure so that we can begin talking to voters and Olympia about permanent stable funding to save Metro. The Council has a stark choice before us—enact emergency funding for Metro or watch our transit system shrink down to 1996 service levels, despite huge growth in population and transit use since that time. With the fragility of King County's economic recovery, the burden of \$4 per gallon gas and the crisis of climate change, preserving our transit system is the most important action we can take for mobility, jobs, and the environment in King County.

Metro Transit service is critical to the economy of King County, providing approximately 110 million rides annually, taking hundreds of thousands of cars off the road each day, and helping people get to and from some of the largest employment and activity centers in our state. More information about Metro's financial crisis and the Congestion Reduction Charge is available at this [link](#).

Thanks again for offering to host the July 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, and thanks in advance for inviting members of your community who may be interested in this topic.

Sincerely,

**Larry Phillips, Councilmember**  
**Metropolitan King County Council, District Four**  
King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue, Room 1200  
Seattle, WA 98104-3272  
206.296.1004  
[larry.phillips@kingcounty.gov](mailto:larry.phillips@kingcounty.gov)

For more information: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/phillips>